

Message Text

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TAGS: USINJJ, IN, US

SUBJ: SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION WITH THE GOI; S&T SUBCOMMISSION
MEETING; RUPEE-SUPPORTED RESEARCH

REF: STATE 254761

SUMMARY: IN VIEW OF MRS. GANDHI'S CRITICISM OF FOREIGN-
SPONSORED RESEARCH, THE AMBASSADOR URGES THAT THE
INITIATIVE FOR PREPARATIONS FOR THE DECEMBEG MEETING OF
THE SUBCOMMISSION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BE LEFPEAZM
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THE INDIAN SIDE. THE AMBASSADOR HAS DECIDED TO HOLD
PENDING NEW APPROVALS OF RUPEE-SUPPORTED JOINT RESEARCH
PROJECTS UNTIL WE ARE ASSURED THE GOI SEEKS THEM IN
ACCORDANCE WITH POLICIES APPROVED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL IN
THE GOI. GOI POLICIES ON JOINT RESEARCH SHOULD BECOME
MORE CLEAR FOLLOWING THE S&T SUBCOMMISSION MEETING AND
THE COMPLETION OF A HIGH LEVEL REVIEW NOW IN PROCESS
WITHIN
THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA. END SUMMARY.

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1. WE HAVE REPORTED SEPARATELY (NEW DELHI 14341) REMARKS

MADE BY MRS. GANDHI ON INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION WHICH BEAR ON PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMING S&T SUBCOMMISSION AND US RUPEE-SUPPORTED RESEARCH IN GENERAL. BRIEFLY SUMMARIZED, MRS. GANDHI COMMENTED THAT TOO MUCH OF THE TIME OF INDIAN SCIENTISTS GOES TO INTERNATIONAL SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES AND IN THE ABSENCE OF ADEQUATE GOI FINANCING, INDIAN SCIENTISTS LOOK UP TO FOREIGN-SPONSORED RESEARCH WHICH IS GEARED TO THE PRIORITIES OF THE SPONSOR WITH THE RESULT THAT INDIAN SCIENTIFIC TALENT GOES TO SERVE PURPOSES OF OTHERS AND "SOMETIMES WE ARE USED AS GUINEA PIGS."

2. MRS. GANDHI'S REMARKS UNDERLINE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S VIEW THAT THE BURDEN FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN THE DECEMBER S&T SUBCOMMISSION MEETING SHOULD REST WITH THE INDIANS. HE CONSIDERS THAT WE SHOULD PROCEED WITH FURTHER INDO-US SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION ONLY ON THE RECEIPT OF SPECIFIC REQUESTS WHICH CARRY WITH THEM FULL GOVERNMENTAL APPROVAL (I.E., REFLECTING THE POLICY OF THE PRIME MINISTER) AND SUPPORT.

3. THUS FAR, INDIAN PREPARATIONS FOR THE SUBCOMMISSION MEETING HAVE NOT MOVED RAPIDLY; THE INDIANS HAVE NOT YET PRODUCED SPECIFIC PROJECT PROPOSALS FOR OUR REVIEW AND AS INDICATED REFTTEL THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO DO SO UNTIL VERY SHORTLY BEFORE THE SUBCOMMISSION MEETING.

4. NEVERTHELESS, WE URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT DEFER TAKING ANY INITIATIVE TO EXPLORE WITH THE INDIAN EMBASSY OF OTHER WAYS IN WHICH THE WORK OF THE S&T SUBCOMMISSION CAN BE FILLED OUT. PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF MRS. GANDHI'S CRITICISM OF INDIAN SCIENTISTS' PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SEMINARS, WE BELIEVE THIS IDEA SHOULD BE DROPPED AS A US PROPOSAL. FURTHER, WE BELIEVE THAT THE INSTITUTIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION SHOULD BE EXPLORED ONLY AFTER THE GOI'S ATTITUDE TOWARD COLLABORATION HAS BEEN CLARIFIED. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, WE BELIEVE IT BEST THAT WE AWAIT WORD FROM THE GOI REGARDING A DRAFT AGENDA; IT WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR US TO PRESS THE

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GOI FOR AN AGENDA OR TO MAKE OUR OWN PROPOSALS BEFORE WE HAVE THEIRS.

5. DURING A DISCUSSION ON OTHER MATTERS WITH JOINT SECRETARY FOR THE AMERICAS TEJA ON OCTOBER 28, WE NOTED MRS. GANDHI'S REMARKS AND AGAIN SAID THAT THE USG WOULD CARRY OUT ONLY THAT RESEARCH SOUGHT BY THE GOI. WE ALSO INDICATED THAT WE LOOKED TO THE INDIAN CHAIRMAN OF THE

S&T SUBCOMMISSION TO INITIATIVE PREPARATIONS FOR THE SUBCOMMISSION MEETING. TEJA TOOK NOTES AND INDICATED HE WOULD PASS IN THIS INFORMATION.

6. IT IS BECOMING APPARENT THAT THE INDIANS ARE MAKING A DISTINCTION BETWEEN JOINTRESEARCH CARRIED OUT UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE S&T SUBCOMMISSION AND OTHER RUPEE-SUPPORTED JOINT RESEARCH. THE MOST RECENT INDICATION WAS NAG CHOUDHURY'SHQSTATEMENT TO US THAT HE WOULD STICK HIS NECK OUT ONLY FOR SUBCOMMISSION PROJECTS AND, BY IMPLICATION, NOT FOR OTHER RUPEE-SUPPORTED PROJECTS. MRS. GANDHI IN HER SPEECH INDICATED THAT THE GOI WAS ENAGED IN A REVIEW OF ITS SCIENCE POLICY. SHE MAY HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO THE REVIEW IN PROCESS BY BOTH A COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS AND A SUBORDINATE COMMITTEE OF SECRETARIES OF SCIENTIFIC COLLABORATION WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES. THIS REVIEW WAS APPARENTLY STIULATED BY THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE WHO/US/GOI PROJECT ON THE GENETIC CONTROL OF MOSQUITOS WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, COMCLUDED THAT THE GOI INADEQUATELY SCREENED AND CONTROLLED PROJECTS WHICH MIGHT BE HARMFUL TO THE NATIONAL INTEREST. THE GOI HAS OBVIOUSLY TAKEN THIS REPORT SERIOUSLY. WE HAVE ASKED THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF SECRETARIES (CABINET SECRETARY PANDE) FOR A DESCRIPTION OF THE NEW SCREENING PROCEDURES AND THE CRITERIA WHICH WOULD BE APPLIED, BUT HE HAS HELD US OFF SAYING THAT THE COMMITTEES HAD NOT YET COMPLETED THEIR TASK. WE ALSO ASKED HIM HOW THE COMMITTEES WOULD VIEW EXISTING JOINT RSEARCH PROJECTS. HE REPLIED THAT HE ASSUMED THEY WOULD NOT CONSIDER PROJECTS WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN APPROVED BUT MADE AN EXCEPTION IN REGARD TO ANY ONGOING PROJECTS WHICH HAD BEEN SINGLED OUT FOR CRITICISM BY THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE. THESE, HE SAID, WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE TO BE EXAMINED.

7. IN VIEW OF THESE UNCERTAINTIES IN REGARD TO WHAT THE INDIANS SEEM TO CONSIDER A SEPARATE CATEGORY OF RUPEE-SUPPORTED RESEARCH, WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD MOVE SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY IN REGARD TO NEW REPEE-SUPPORTED PROJECTS. TCE EMBASSY HAS NOT NOTIFIED THE GOI OF USG APPROVAL OF A NEW PROJECT FOR OVER TWO MONTHS AND IS AT PRESENT HOLDING PENDING THREE PROJECTS. WE INTEND TO CONTINUE TO DEFER ACTION ON NEW PROJECTS UNTIL THE GOI ATTITUDE TOWARD THEM HAS BEEN CLARIFIED. WE WILL LOOK TO THE MEETING OF THE S&T SUBCOMMISSION AND THE COMPLETION OF THE GOI REVIEW PROCESS FOR INDICATIONS OF THAT ATTITUDE. IN ANY EVENT, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD GIVE A GO-AHEAD FOR NEW PROJECTS UNTIL THE GOI

TELLS US IN A MANNER WHICH REFLECTS GOVERNMENT POLICY
FORMED AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL THAT IT SEEKS OUR COLLABORATION
IN PROJECTS WHICH HAVE GONE THROUGH THE GOI SCREENING
PROCESS.
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